

Message Text

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E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: BEXP JA

SUBJECT: EXPORT DEVELOPMENT MISSION: HOKKAIDO

1. ICA-SPONSORED TRADE IMAGE SEMINAR CONDUCTED BY WANDA ALE FROM DOC, ASSISTED BY REPRESENTATIVES FROM THE EMBASSY AND AMERICAN CHAMBER IN JAPAN, UNCOVERED STRONG INTEREST IN SAPPORO IN HAVING AT LEAST A PORTION OF OCTOBER TRADE MISSION MEMBERS VISIT HOKKAIDO. REFLECTING THE REGION'S STRONG AGRICULTURAL ORIENTATION, FOOD PACKAGING AND PROCESSING EQUIPMENT WERE IDENTIFIED REPEATEDLY AS HAVING A POTENTIALLY SIGNIFICANT MARKET HERE. MEDICAL EQUIPMENT, AND ENGINEERING SERVICES FOR BOTH LARGE SCALE PUBLIC WORKS AND PRIVATE INDUSTRY WERE ALSO RECOMMENDED.

2. THE UNPRECEDENTEDLY LARGE UNMBER OF SEMINAR PARTICIPANTS (75), INCLUDING A DOZEN TOP EXECUTIVES OF BOTH LOCAL AND NATIONAL ORGANIZATIONS, STRESSED THE NEED FOR US EXPORTERS TO "USE THEIR LEGS" AND MAKE FREQUENT AND PERSONAL CONTACT WITH POTENTIAL JAPANESE CUSTOMERS. NOTING THAT JAPANESE EXPORTERS HAVE BEEN STUDYING AND DEVELOPING THE US MARKET FOR THIRTY YEARS, THEY FORCEFULLY POINTED OUT THAT THE JAPANESE EXPERIENCE SHOOWS THAT A SUCCESSFUL EXPORT
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PERFORMANCE TAKES BOTH TIME AND EFFORT.

3. THIS POINT WAS IRONICALLY UNDERSCORED BY A SHARP SPLIT AMONG THE PARTICIPANTS AS TO THE BEST WAY TO EXPORT TO THE HOKKAIDO MARKET. ONE GROUP, REPRESENTING THE LARGE TRADING FIRMS AND BANKS HEADQUARTERED IN TOKYO, EMPHASIZED TIEING UP WITH FIRMS HAVING NATIONWIDE FINANCIAL AND DISTRIBUTION

NETWORKS. LOCALLY BASED REPRESENTATIVES ENERGETICALLY REPORTED THAT THE NATIONAL COMPANIES IGNORED THE LARGE MARKET POTENTIAL OF SMALL AND MEDIUM SIZED REGIONAL FIRMS. THEY RECOMMENDED WORKING THROUGH PREFECTURAL GOVERNMENT OFFICES, REGIONAL TRADING FIRMS AND LOCAL BUT STILL SUBSTANTIAL BANKS WHO HAVE DETAILED KNOWLEDGE OF REGIONAL MARKETS AND CAN REACH SMALL AND MEDIUM SIZED END-USERS.

4. OBVIOUSLY BOTH METHODS ARE VALID. BUT CHOOSING WHICH ONE WOULD BE BEST FOR A PARTICULAR PRODUCT DEPENDS ON A VARIETY OF CONSIDERATIONS THAT CAN ONLY BE DETERMINED AFTER CAREFUL ON-THE-SPOT STUDY. WE THEREFORE HEARTILY SECOND THE SUGGESTION THAT TRADE MISSION REPS FROM THE FOOD PACKAGING/PROCESSING, MEDICAL EQUIPMENT AND ENGINEERING INDUSTRIES VISIT SAPPORO THIS OCTOBER AND A FIRST STEP IN DEVELOPING THE HOKKAIDO MARKET.
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